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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN: UPDATE ON ATTORNEYS AHSAN AND MALIK

REF: ISLAMABAD 4994

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (U) Summary. Both the current and former Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association Presidents have been released from jail. Aitzaz Ahsan has been transferred to house arrest in Lahore where he was allowed to file his election nomination papers. Munir Malik was transferred to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences and released from detention; he is undergoing dialysis for a chronic liver disease and gave a TV interview from his hospital bedside. End Summary.

AITZAZ AHSAN

12. (U) On November 25, Aitzaz Ahsan, the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association president, was escorted by police to the sessions court in Lahore to file his nomination for a National Assembly seat for the January 8 elections. This registration was conducted after the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader was moved from the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, where he had been held since the proclamation of emergency, to his home in Zaman Park (Lahore), dubbed by authorities as a "sub-jail." While he and four other PPP members submitted their papers, reportedly large numbers of lawyers expressed support for Aitzaz and chanted anti-government slogans. (Note: This is a case of particular interest to Senator Conrad.)

MUNIR MALIK

13. (C) On November 24, former Supreme Court Bar Association president Munir Malik was moved from an Attock district jail to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for treatment for chronic liver disease. The GOP reportedly has now released him from detention status. His relatives were denied visitation rights to the jail by the Ministry of Interior, and there has been press speculation that he was tortured. (Note: In repeated meetings with Emboffs over the past few months, Malik was intoxicated, even in his Supreme Court office. While this does not negate any allegations of torture, it does give credence to the government's claim that Malik is suffering from chronic liver disease.) From his hospital bed November 25, Malik gave an interview on Dawn TV criticizing the government.

PATTERSON